

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

USLO PEKING

USSAG NAKHON PHANOM

CINCPAC

UNCLAS STATE 167160

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XC, US

SUBJECT: AUGUST 22 EA PRESS SUMMARY

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INDOCHINA

1. GLOBE AND MAIL'S JOHN BURNS(WP; NYT) IN PEKING  
REPORTS SIHANOUK IN MEETING WITH CORRESPONDENTS

DESCRIBES PRES. AS LIAR, AND DENIED HE HAD EVER ACQUIESCED IN SECRET CAMBODIA BOMBING; CONCEDED HE HAD INVITED PRES. TO VISIT CAMBODIA WHILE BOMBING GOING ON, BUT DENIED THIS CONSTITUTED TACIT ACCEPTANCE OF ATTACKS AS PRES. MAINTAINED. SUGGESTED THAT THOSE, INCLUDING LON NOL, WHO CONSPIRED IN HIS OUSTER, HAD SECRET AGREEMENT WITH PRES. FOR BOMBING. ADDS THAT HE REPEATEDLY PROTESTED BOMBING IN FORMAL MESSAGES TO US EMBASSY AND IN A PUBLISHED WHITE PAPER THAT INCLUDED A LIST OF TARGETS UNDER ATTACK AND PHOTOS OF DAMAGE. RENEWING OLD CHARGE OF US INVOLVEMENT IN HIS OVERTHROW, SIHANOUK ASSERTED THAT PRES. WOULD NOT HAVE NEEDED ENGINEER HIS OUSTER HAD HE ALLOWED THE BOMBING TO CONTINUE. CONCERNING PRESENT SITUATION, SIHANOUK SEES KI LIMITING PRESSURE ON PP TO ROCKETING AND SHELLING AND OCCASIONAL TERRORIST ATTACK; THEY WILL CONCENTRATE ON ASSAULTING IMPORTANT PROVINCIAL CAPITALS, AMONG THEM KOMPONG CHAM. AMMO SHORTAGES AND FEAR OF US REPRISALS CAUSING HIS FORCES TO DEFER ASSAULTS ON PP TO DRY SEASON. AFTER CAPTURING ENOUGH US WEAPONS AND AMMO FROM GKR FORCES, THEY WILL ATTACK IN DECEMBER. REPEATS REFUSAL TO NEGOTIATE COMPROMISE SOLUTION TO WAR, SAYING IT ONLY MATTER OF TIME BEFORE ALL CAMBODIA FALLS TO COMMUNISTS - A SITUATION HE SAYS HE CAN'T PREVENT, EVEN IF HE WANTED TO, WHICH HE DOES NOT. BLAMES PRES. FOR COMMUNIST SUCCESS IN COMMUNIZATION OF SEA, SAYING, "IN THAT RESPECT MAO AND HO HAVE NOT CONTRIBUTED ONE-TENTH OF WHAT RICHARD NIXON HAS."

2. MOST PAPERS FEATURE NEWS CONFERENCE OF GKR AMBASSADOR (AND ILLINOIS GRADUATE) UM SIM IN WHICH HE READS "OPEN LETTER" TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND MAKES EMOTIONAL PLEA THAT US NOT LET CAMBODIA DOWN. LETTER SAYS CAMBODIA'S JOINING FORCES IN 1970 WITH US AND GVN SAVED MANY AMERICAN LIVES AND GKR BELIEVED US WOULD UNCLASSIFIED

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RECOGNIZE MORAL OBLIGATION EVEN WITHOUT FORMAL TREATY; BOMBING HALT REMOVES MOST DIRECT AND EFFECTIVE SUPPORT, BUT GKR WILL FIGHT ON THOUGH IT NEEDS CONTINUED MILITARY, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN AID FROM US; FALL OF GKR WOULD HAVE FAR-RANGING REPERCUSSIONS, AND IF US ABANDONS FRIENDS SHE WILL END UP ALONE IN WORLD. TO QUESTIONS, UM SIM REPLIES THAT US TO CERTAIN EXTENT SOLD OUT GKR - BUT IT FEELS ABANDONED NOT BETRAYED; HE IS CONFIDENT GKR WILL SURVIVE AND NO PLAN EXISTS FOR EVACUATION OF LON NOL AND HIGH OFFICIALS. GKR HAS NO PRESENT INTENTION OF ASKING FOR RESUMPTION OF BOMBING, BUT MIGHT MAKE SUCH REQUEST IF NVN COMMITS ITS FORCES TO BATTLE; HE SUPPORTS

PRES.' STATEMENT ON SECRET BOMBING. PAPERS NOTE CONFERENCE WAS ARRANGED BY AMERICAN SECURITY COUNCIL (GWERTZMAN, NYT; MACLEAN, CHITRIB; NYDN; CSM). PHINQ ADDS THAT UM SIM'S WORDS ECHOED BY ADM. MOORER OF JCS ON TV "TODAY" SHOW (ALSO NYT, UPI). MARDER (WP) ALSO SEES UM SIM'S CONFERENCE AS START OF CAMPAIGN TO CONVINCE CONGRESS THAT US HAS OBLIGATION TO CONTINUE ASSISTANCE; MOORER MORE GUARDED IN ASSESSMENT OF GKR ABILITY TO FIGHT ON, BUT STATES IT HAS COME LONG WAY SINCE 1970.

3. US SOURCES SAY CAMBODIAN MILITARY SITUATION IMPROVED, BUT WARN OF NEW BATTLE FOR PP SOON SINCE KI DO NOT WANT LOSE MOMENTUM; SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS WITH KI MAY AWAIT OUTCOME OF BATTLE. TWO TRUCK CONVOYS, ONE EACH FROM BATTAMBANG AND KOMPONG SOM, ARRIVE UNMOLESTED. GKR OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS UNDERWAY AROUND PP. KOMPONG CHAM REINFORCED, KI FIRE AT CARGO PLANES APPROACHING KOMPONG CHAM. KI STRENGTH ESTIMATED AT 40-50,000 WITH ABOUT 3500 NVA COMBAT TROOPS AND 2000 ADVISORS (NYT, AP; NYDN). REBELS SHELL GKR BASE AT MUK KAMPOUL 10 MI N. OF PP; SKIRMISH NEAR SVAY ROLEM 7 MI S. OF PP LEAVES 6 KI DEAD; FIGHTING CONTINUES NEAR KOMPONG SPEU AND AT KOMPONG CHAM (WP). AMEMBASSY PP ACKNOWLEDGES US OFFICERS ACCOMPANY FANK AS OBSERVERS AND REPORTERS (PHINQ; CHITRIB, UPI). US ASSESSMENT IS THAT HANOI EXPECTED PP TO FALL, MADE COSTLY PUSH BEFORE BOMBING ENDED IN ORDER NOT UNCLASSIFIED

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TO BE OVERTAKEN BY PEACE TALKS (SUN). SOUTHERLAND, (CSM), AT KOMPONG CHAM, REPORTS FANK WOULD LIKE US AIR SUPPORT AGAIN. CITY QUIET, BUT SOME WEALTHY RESIDENTS LEAVE FOR PP AS KI CLOSE IN.

4. SCHANBERG (NYT) TELLS OF INDIFFERENCE, INDOLENCE AND ORGIES IN THREATENED PP WHILE LON NOL CONSULTS SOOTHSAYERS. ATMOSPHERE UNREAL AS FOREIGN SPORTS TEAMS ARRIVE FOR MATCHES DURING HEAVY FIGHTING. GKR ATTEMPTS AT PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE OFTEN FIZZLE; AMEMBASSY PP ALWAYS NERVOUS, NOW FORBIDS SOCIAL CONTACTS BETWEEN STAFF MEMBERS AND PRESS. NEWSMEN WHO RUSHED IN FOR AUGUST 15 BOMBING HALT INTERVIEWED EACH OTHER AND ARGUED; MANY HAVE LEFT. AIR FORCE SMALL THOUGH RECENTLY BOLSTERED SO FANK WILL DEPEND MOST HEAVILY ON ARTILLERY TO REPLACE US BOMBING.

5. RLG EXECUTIONS EXTENSIVELY REPORTED. SHIPLER (NYT) QUOTES RLG THAT 20 TAKEN, 2 OR 3 EXECUTED, REST UNDER INTERROGATION BUT WILL BE SHOT WITHOUT TRIALS. PURGE OF RIGHTIST ELEMENTS IN MILITARY MAY FOLLOW. RELATIONS BETWEEN RLG AND RTG DETERIORATE

SINCE REBELS WERE TOLERATED IN THAILAND. KEY QUESTION IS IMPACT OF COUP ATTEMPT ON PL-RLG PEACE NEGOTIATIONS; NOW PL MAY DEMAND MORE TROOPS IN VIENTIANE TO PROTECT DELEGATION. CHITRIB SAYS 11 EXECUTED SO FAR (ALSO WP, AP; CSM; SUN). NEELD (CHITRIB) DESCRIBES SEQUENCE OF EVENTS, SAYS THAT 100 TOOK PART IN ATTEMPT BUT OUTSIDE HELP DID NOT MATERIALIZE. CHARGE DEAN WENT TO AIRPORT DURING BATTLE TO TRY TO MEDIATE WITH THAO MA BETWEEN LATTER'S T-28 SORTIES. GROUND FIRE BROUGHT THAO MA DOWN AND HE WAS TAKEN TO HOSPITAL, LATER DIED. SOME COUP LEADERS MAY HAVE ESCAPED TO THAKHEK.

6. COMMUNIST FORCES LAUNCH HEAVY ATTACK ON GVN RANGER BASES IN CENTRAL HIGHLANDS. GOVERNMENT FORCES REPULSE ATTACK KILLING 89 ATTACKERS (UPI, CHITRIB; WP). ALSO SVN MILITARY COMMAND REPORTS THAT HUE OUTER DEFENSE PERIMETER CAME UNDER HEAVY SUSTAINED SHELLING BY COMMUNISTS; ATTACK, ONE OF HEAVIEST IN SEVERAL MONTHS, CONSIDERED DIVERSIONARY - TO DRAW ATTENTION FROM LARGE UNCLASSIFIED

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VC ROAD-BUILDING PROGRAM ALONG AND OUT OF A SHAU VALLEY WHICH RUNS PARALLEL TO LAOTIAN BORDER WEST OF HUE. ARVN VETS AND WAR WIDOWS FORM COMMITTEE TO COMBAT RISING PRICES AND PRESS GVN FOR PRICE CONTROLS (REUTERS, NYT).

7. IRANIAN FORNMIN FORMALLY ANNOUNCES THAT IRAN WILL JOIN ICCS. ADVANCE PARTY OF 12 TO 20 CIVILIAN AND MILITARY REPS EXPECTED

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SEOUL  
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VIENTIANE  
WARSAW  
WELLINGTON  
BIEN HOA  
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